



CHUCK LESNICK

Reports to the People

City Council President



Green For Spring 2008

Across the country, we see “green business” as good business. One of the fastest-growing sectors of the economy is in “green collar” jobs -- people working in recycling, energy efficiency and conservation. Such smart growth and sustainable development will result in higher returns, both financially and environmentally.

The City is offering two major events dedicated to responsible growth. **Yonkers Green Week, April 20-27**, is an initiative my office organized with a dozen environmental groups to coordinate a city-wide environmental expo dedicated to education and hands-on events. In addition, the Mayor’s office and the Office of Economic Development are presenting **Yonkers Business Week, May 5-9**. It is this cooperative spirit that further demonstrates the future of our City’s success.

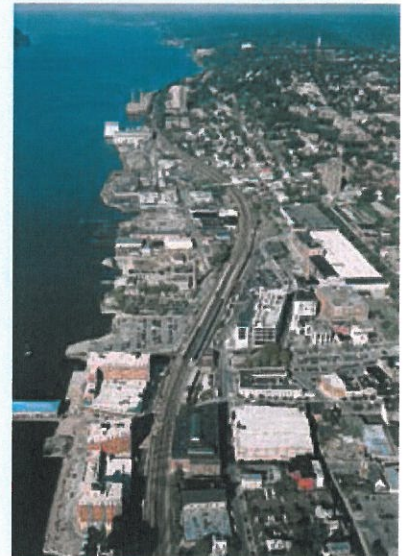
As a former director of economic development for Yonkers, I could not be more pleased with the renaissance our City is starting to enjoy. The challenge now is to meld the vision of a redeveloped Yonkers with a focus on preserving and protecting our built and natural environment.

The City Council is currently reviewing two projects that will transform our downtown waterfront. The largest proposed development in the City’s history is Struever, Fidelco, Cappelli’s (SFC) plan to daylight the Saw Mill River and build River Park Center, a shopping complex topped by a ballpark, in addition to the construction of two 50-story apartment towers, plus two 25-story waterfront buildings.



We recently completed a diligent review of the 4,000-page Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) that details dozens of considerations from traffic congestion and air pollution to sewers and brownfields. The next important step is a public hearing scheduled for **6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, April 29** in the Council Chambers. The two-week period to receive written comments will end on **Tuesday, May 13**, coinciding with an additional meeting scheduled for 7:00 p.m. at Roosevelt High School that night.

The other waterfront project is still under review by the Yonkers Community Development Agency, of which I am vice chairman. The Alexander Street Master Plan is a framework for developing Alexander Street along the Hudson River between the Yonkers and Glenwood Metro North stations. The initial Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement called for 18 towers ranging in height from 12 to 30 stories; 3,752 apartment units; 210,000 square feet of retail space; and 213,500 square feet of office space.



After two public hearings this year, our consultants are redrafting the proposal to add more open space and less density as per the public comments.



With all buzz about new development, it is critical to strike a balance between old and new -- to preserve our historical structures while building toward the future.

To that end, the Council landmarked the Wilson-Eyre estate at 575 North Broadway this year after neighbors rallied to save the historic home from a developer who planned to knock it down to build five new houses on the property. This was a significant victory -- one that will hopefully set a citywide example for historic preservation. I am also working with the Council and the Mayor on either a Demolition Review Ordinance or Executive Order to trigger a preliminary historic review any time a demolition permit is filed for a building at least 75 years old.



Such preservation is inherently green. When considering our carbon footprint, note that the cost of knocking down a two-story building slated for the landfill is the equivalent of recycling 1,344,000 aluminum cans.

By preserving such estates and buildings, the Council is not only acting responsibly toward the environment by reducing pollution, but also toward our future by preserving historic relics of our past.

To answer this call, we have created the **Green Policy Task Force (GPTF)** and the **City Council Committee for Environmental Policy and Protection (EPP)**. The Mayor also appointed members to a McMansion Task Force that will soon send recommendations to the City Council regarding building height, set-back and floor area ratio.



Chuck and his family hike the Appalachian Trail.

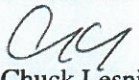


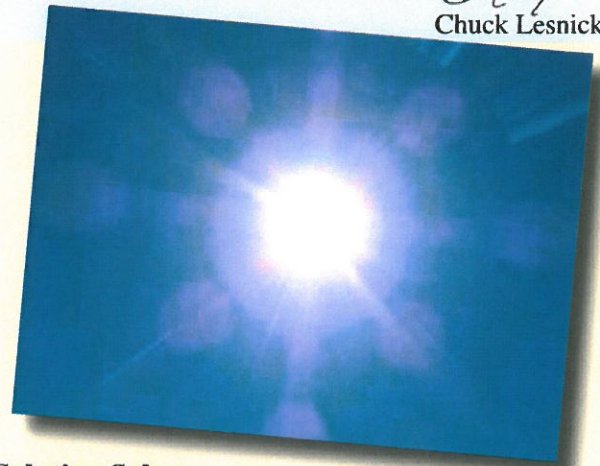
Carbon footprint: The total amount of carbon dioxide attributable to the actions of an individual (mainly through their energy use) over a period of one year.

What follows is an account of what they have accomplished and where they are headed. All of these initiatives have had the unanimous backing of the City Council and most have had the support of Mayor Amicone and his Administration. We are also fortunate to have a green-friendly County Executive in Andy Spano, who created a Westchester County Global Warming Task Force whose directives have helped guide our initiatives. We also derive support from County Legislators Jose Alvarado, Gordon Burrows, Ken Jenkins, and Bernice Spreckman.

Join me in guiding Yonkers toward sustaining our resources while moving forward. Hopefully, these immediate changes will last a lifetime.

For more news and information, please go to www.YonkersNY.gov and click on City Council President.


Chuck Lesnick



Saluting Solar

Admittedly, Eckardt and his wife, Maryjo, chose their Northwest neighborhood based on its walking distance proximity to the train station. But it was the blackout of 2003 that made them go off-grid by installing solar panels instead of relying 100% on traditionally generated electricity.

"It made us realize we were too dependent on fossil fuels," Eckardt said, admiring his sun-absorbing sculptural structure.

The \$12,000 investment has yet to pay-off, though they are enjoying a 30% reduction on their bill a month.

"This is our way of saying thank you to the planet," says Maryjo.

Lesnick's home has solar panels installed on the roof to preheat the water that he and his family use as a cost and energy saving measure.



Lesnick announces new Green Policy Task Force at Hudson River press conference.

The formation of a **Green Policy Task Force (GPTF)** Force was announced at a waterfront press conference on June 1st by the Yonkers City Council. It includes all City Council members and community representatives from each of their districts. They are Bob Walters (Lesnick); Nortrud Spero (Annabi); Terry Joshi (McLaughlin); Margaret Setterholm (McDow); Loretta Miraglia (Gronowski); Molly Roffman (Murtagh); Mel Goldstein (Barbato), as well as Joe D'Lando (Mayor Phil Amicone).

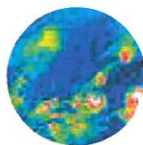
The Task Force meets biweekly and often invites local government officials and environmental experts to discuss policy considerations. To learn more or join us, go to www.YonkersNY.gov.

The GPTF has formed four sub-committees for issues facing Westchester County and Yonkers:

Transportation

- The GPTF recently submitted a proposal to the EPA for the Clean School Bus USA Initiative and was awarded \$300,000 for Yonkers to retrofit Yonkers diesel school buses with emissions control equipment. The task force also plans to work with the Board of Education's transportation department to help educate bus drivers and students about Yonkers 3-minute idling law that restricts bus and car idling on school grounds. Both of these efforts will reduce exposure to potentially harmful exhaust and reduce environmental impact. Yonkers is ahead of the curve nationally which is great news for New York's 4th largest city which spends \$35.9 million a year on school transportation for about 850 runs a day.

Global warming: an increase in the earth's atmospheric and oceanic temperatures widely predicted to occur due to an increase in the greenhouse effect resulting especially from pollution.



Chuck, on left, rides with Yonkers Bike Club.

- The committee is interested in launching a "Bike Friendly Yonkers" campaign to create bike lanes on city streets, install racks on county buses and build more "bike parking spots" in public spaces. The Yonkers Riverfront Library offers an imaginative example of how to use artistic talent to create a fun, yet functional bike stand.

Mower Over

Neighbors wondered why the lawn at the Starobin's house on Bronxville Road was covered in clear plastic rather than green grass last summer. Some even knocked on the door to find out.



Pam and her husband, Matt, could not bring themselves to use pesticides even though the onion grass and weeds were overtaking the lawn. They did some research and decided to try a weed-killing technique called soil solarization. It seemed simple enough to lay a sheet of plastic over the lawn and wait for the sun to "cook" the pathogens and weeds away.

It took almost six weeks but it worked!

What's more, they rarely have to cut the grass or use pesticides or fertilizers again. Instead they grew a soft meadow of grass, sweet clovers, wildflowers, and herbs which put nitrogen back in the soil.

"It was a fascinating experiment and we're very happy with the results," says Pam. "Now people knock to ask how they can do the same!"

Energy Efficiency and Green Buildings

• This sub-committee will encourage Yonkers to comply with national energy efficiency models such as LEED standards and Energy Star® certification for all new construction and renovation projects in an effort to build energy efficient, comfortable and environmentally sound homes and buildings. Financing is available through the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) for everything from new windows and lighting to performance-tested HVAC systems. Owners will save an average of 30% of their energy costs.



Land Use

• The GPTF is starting to review all city-owned parcels of land in an effort to negotiate new open park space, as shown above, through reviews of zoning, codes and Draft Environmental Impact Statements. We will also pay close attention to steep slopes/water run-off and plan to facilitate grants for protecting and improving the parks we have. The Task Force is advocating for Yonkers to adopt Westchester County's Greenway Compact Plan, which was created to facilitate the development of a voluntary regional strategy for preserving scenic, natural, historic, cultural and recreational resources while encouraging compatible economic development and maintaining the tradition of home rule for land use decision-making.

Chasing Mad Air

As an energy engineer, Yonkers resident Robert Hothan knows a thing or two about green building. Since buying and renovating an 1891 former blacksmith's building on Bashford St. in Larkin Plaza, he has made many energy saving improvements to meet modern-day standards.

One of the most cost-effective is called air sealing which literally means to close unwanted air exchanges between floors, windows, gaps and anywhere else where he can seal "mad air."

Not only does he contain nearly 50% more of his heat or air conditioning, he is reducing his carbon footprint and saving money.

"This is one of the unsung green building practices," he smiles, patting his wallet.



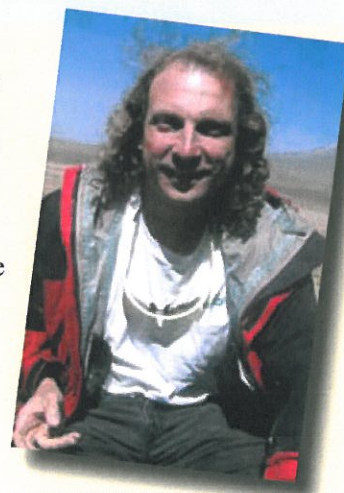
Chuck calls for recycling campaign signs.

Recycling/Waste Reduction

• The GPTF is in discussions with the Department of Public Works to increase the number of electronics-recycling and hazardous waste collection days in Yonkers as well as the number of pick-up locations.

• The Task Force also assisted students from Riverside High School for Engineering and Design on Warburton Ave. in turning their school into a model for environmentally friendly schools. They are a very motivated group who, after launching their new recycling program amid media fan fare last month, are now hoping to be acknowledged by the County's Wastewise School Program to become the recycling model for all Yonkers public schools. You may soon see their environmental public service announcements aired on City Channel 78.

• The City Council created the GPTF on the same day it unanimously passed a resolution urging Mayor Amicone to sign onto the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement (CPA), joining 800 municipalities in striving to meet Kyoto Protocol standards of reducing carbon emission by 7% or better from 1990 levels by the year 2012.



- The City Council created and funded the position of Green Policy Coordinator, currently titled "Manager, Environmental and Sustainable Development." The Administration is in the final hiring stages, and we look forward to working with that individual to help direct much-needed changes and policies.

- The Task Force urged the City to become official members of ICLEI: Local Governments for Sustainability and received training on their Climate Action Climate Protection software to process and obtain Yonkers-specific data on the City's carbon footprint. This will help us to prioritize, prepare and implement an effective Carbon Emissions Reduction Plan for the City of Yonkers.

- In January, the City Council created a new **City Council Committee for Environmental Policy and Protection (EPP)**, chaired by Minority Leader Liam McLaughlin with Council members Joan Gronowski and Council President Lesnick on board. The committee plans to process the energy star code changes and waste

Farmer Ford

Margie Ford's mother chided her daughter's shopping and eating habits as they did errands together one day.

"Why don't you just shop at a store?" her mother insisted as Margie collected her bags of refrigerated meat and recycled cardboard boxes brimming with beets, onions, greens, peaches and more from a friend's garage for her weekly crop share of locally-grown organic, free-range food.

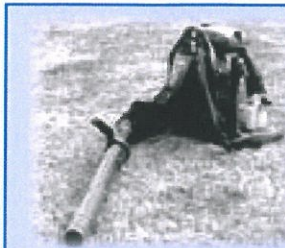
To Margie, the question was as incredulous as asking why she didn't serve her family left over frozen TV dinners from the 60's in 2008.

A practitioner of healthy eating and holistic living, not a trace of additive, chemical, dye, or artificial flavoring has passed her family's lips in the past 10 years. She joined a local "buying group" that receives food directly from an Upstate, NY "green" farm.

"I can't stand the thought of putting pesticides into the earth for my family to eat," she says, adding that her mother was coming over for dinner!



Margie's weekly lot.



The Task Force recently helped pass the first clean air/public health legislation to come before the Yonkers City Council by adopting a seasonal ban on gas-powered leaf blowers from June 1 to September 30. This is a real victory

for public health and clean air in our region, as one blower pollutes as much in one hour as a car that drove 100 miles. The gas-powered machines also force dangerous ground-level substances such as lead, feces, organic carbon, chromium, arsenic, cadmium, nickel, and mercury into the air that we breathe.

management solutions that have recently come before the Council. The Committee is urging state lawmakers to make environmentally sound decisions, such as including the "Bigger Better Bottle Bill" in this year's budget. The resolution, which the Council unanimously passed in March, calls for the remaining non-carbonated bottled beverages, such as water containers, to carry a 5 cent refundable deposit. The deposit money would go to New York's Environmental Protection Fund (EPF), along with all unclaimed deposits which totaled \$1.5 million last year alone. The EPF helps municipalities fund local parks among other environmental projects.

- The Council's Green Policy Task Force will celebrate its first birthday by hosting a week's worth of green events throughout the city, from April 20 – 27. From a city-wide environmental film series, energy saving workshops for homeowners and hands-on educational activities for the kids to special admission deals to the Hudson River Museum and the New York Water Taxi, Yonkers' community-based organizations, schools, government and non-governmental agencies, and others are hosting events and activities designed to educate residents about preserving and sustaining our natural environment. Visit www.YonkersNY.gov.

- The Green Policy Task Force is holding its first Yonkers Green Conference and Trade Expo where people can learn leading strategies for effectively greening our community on **Friday, May 2 from 8:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.** and **Saturday, May 3 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.** at the Yonkers Riverfront Library. To register as an exhibitor, call the City Council President's office at 914-377-6060 or email samantha.wapnick@YonkersNY.gov

Highlights include:

- Presentations of LEED Building Certification
- Green Architecture and Design
- Preserving Historical Property the Green Way
- Financing Options and Incentives for Green Projects
- Energy Alternatives for Westchester
- Interactive Demonstrations and Displays



Office of the Yonkers
City Council President

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Spring 2008

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REPORTS TO THE PEOPLE

Yonkers Green Week Events, April 20-27

Go to www.YonkersNY.gov and click on City Council President for complete listings!

Fri., 4/18: 8:30am-3pm: Riverside HS Environmental Day of eco-friendly activities. Foxfire School, City officials' lecture and plant trees at Yonkers Recycling Center.

Sat. 4/19: 1-3pm: "Friendly Fishy Flyers" family art workshop, Hudson River Museum.

Sun., 4/20: 1-3pm: "Friendly Fishy Flyers" family art workshop, Hudson River Museum. 4:30pm: Concert. 5pm: Mass to save the earth, Church of the Annunciation.

Mon., 4/21: 9am-7pm: "Why Celebrate the Earth?" film series, Riverfront Library w/ Westchester's bio-fuel Veggie Van. Noon-12:45pm: "Mad Science" experiments, Riverfront Library. 1-3pm: "School's Out, Stars Are In" workshops/planatarium shows, Hudson River Museum. 2-3pm: "What is Marine Debris?" Riverfront Library.

Tues. 4/22 (EARTH DAY): 7-8am: "Blessing of the Hudson River," Beczak. 1pm: "Recycling, Garden and Art Project," Buena Vista Garden, Greyston & Groundwork Yonkers. 1-3 pm: "Hudson River Estuary Model" hands-on demos for kids, 5-12, Beczak. 3-3:45pm: "Mad Science" experiments, Will Library. 4-5pm: "Treasures from Trash" craft, Riverfront Library. 6-7pm: GPTF and EPP meeting, 4th fl. City Hall.

Wed. 4/23: 1-3pm: "Hudson River Food Chain" hands-on demos for kids, 5-12. Beczak. 2-4pm: "An Inconvenient Truth" film, Will Library. 4-5pm: "Energy Conservation Workshops," Riverfront Library.

Thurs. 4/24: 1-3pm: "Water Clean Up" hands-on demos for kids, 5-12, Beczak. 4pm: "Meet the Animals" ages 3-8, Crestwood Library. 4-5:30pm: "The ChildSafe School," Riverfront Library. 6-8pm: NY Water Taxi discount tour.

Fri. 4/25 (ARBOR DAY): "Free on Friday," Yonkers Recycling Center picks up

appliances containing freon for free. Call 377-6751. 11am-5pm: "Why Celebrate the Earth?" film, Will Library. 11am-4pm: Plant garden and composting workshop, Sarah Lawrence College. 2-3pm: "Energy Conservation Workshops," Riverfront Library. 3pm: "Free-a-Tree Vine Cutting," Odell Ave. and Nepperhan Ave. 5-9pm: "A Crude Awakening" film, Sarah Lawrence College.

Sat. 4/28: 10am-2pm: Kayaking demonstrations, Yonkers Rowing and Paddling Club and Earth Day celebration, Beczak. 10am-2pm: "Mobile Shredder" Yonkers Recycling Center. 2-4pm: Bike Mechanic Workshop, Sarah Lawrence College. 3-4pm: "Create a Recycled Garden Replica," Riverfront Library.

Sun. 4/27: 10am: "Yonkers Bike Club Path-Blazing Ride." 1:30-3:30pm: "A Tree Grows in Yonkers" community garden activity with 55 plus.

Written by Laura Fahrenthold with Samantha Wapnick.